

MEMORANDUM FOR: Deputy Director/Intelligence

SUBJECT: Proposal to Transfer Certain BGN Responsibilities
and Staff Functions to CIA

REFERENCE: Staff Study to the DCI, same subject, from AD/BI
and AD/RR

1. This memorandum incorporates additional information relating to the subject proposal and the referenced staff study which I feel should be brought to your attention in this informal manner. I would be unable to prove all of the points made, but they do represent my understanding of the situation as it has developed over the years.

2. Certain officials of the major map-making agencies of the U.S. Government, both civilian and military, and of the Bureau of the Budget are convinced that the present Board, its Foreign Names Subcommittee, and its staff under the leadership of the present Director of the Office of Geography, Interior, cannot effectively conduct the name research and standardization needed to meet the overall requirements of the several agencies. Hence adequate support has not been received by the Department of Interior in efforts to obtain direct appropriations from Congress.

3. Several suggestions have been made for simplifying procedures for the review of foreign names by the Board's staff prior to standardization. At one extreme, it was suggested that the individual agencies do their own foreign name research and that the staff of the Board provide a very superficial review to see that the names conform to policy before they are approved as standardized names. At the other extreme, was the suggestion that all foreign name research be conducted by a single staff and that this staff conduct all research preliminary to standardization. The Director of the Office of Geography, Interior, favored the latter suggestion, which would require a substantially increased staff. Attempts by him to obtain adequate transfer of funds from all agencies in order to operate in this manner have been unsuccessful. Direct appropriations have been negligible.

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4. As a result of hearings, various members of Congress have been made aware of the operating difficulties faced by the Board and its staff. If there were no change in legislation and CIA assumed staff responsibility for foreign names work under the Board, some members of Congress would maintain continued interest in the activity as a supporting element of the Board's work.

5. Regardless of the solution to the immediate problem, a very real difficulty in conducting the foreign names work of the Board will continue to be the determination of policy for standardization of foreign names and adjustment of policy with changing situations. Frequently, almost impossible situations arise where policy, based on diplomatic and technical considerations, would run counter to military necessity because of the lack of adequate information to apply the policy to a large number of names or because such application would be excessively time-consuming. Approved policy tends to reflect the diplomatically or technically correct solution which the Military Services, for the reasons given above, cannot always follow in handling the thousands of names that must go on their current large-scale maps. A recent problem highlights a related point. A mapping group of NATO has approved the use of de facto names in that portion of Poland taken from Germany, whereas Board policy requires the use of the former German names in that area. Obviously, the Military Services will follow NATO and the MHS publications will use the standardized German names as provided by the BGN.

6. The above comments indicate some of the operating difficulties that would be experienced by CIA if it were to accept the proposal.

/S/

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Research and Reports

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